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Unions: Latest Delphi Offer 'Ridiculous'

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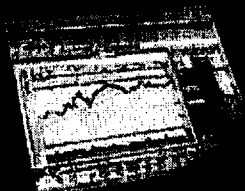
By Tom Krisher, Associated Press Writer

Delphi Makes Another Proposal in Bid to Win Concessions; Union Leaders Call Offer 'Ridiculous'

DETROIT (AP) -- Delphi Corp., the huge auto parts supplier that filed for bankruptcy protection last month, has made another proposal to its unions in an effort to win wage and benefit concessions, but union leaders on Wednesday called the offer "ridiculous."

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The impasse has led to speculation that there could be a strike at Delphi that would cripple the auto industry and especially General Motors Corp., which spun off Delphi in 1999 and relies on the supplier for billions of dollars in parts.

GM shares dropped \$1.32, or 5.8 percent, to close at \$21.29 Wednesday, their lowest level since December 1991.

United Auto Workers President Ron Gettelfinger would not reveal specifics of the new Delphi proposal, but said it still

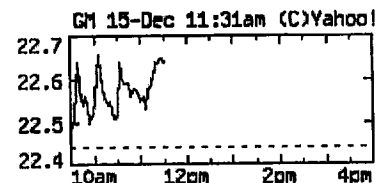
has workers who now make \$27 an hour taking drastic pay cuts.

"It's ridiculous. They know it's ridiculous," Gettelfinger said at a news conference in Detroit.

Delphi said its proposal is competitive with other union-represented suppliers and is based on market wages. Delphi said it would pay workers base wages of between \$10 and \$12.50 an hour, more than it offered in its first proposal to the unions last month.

"This proposal results in a wage and benefit package cost of more than \$21 per hour, placing Delphi in a competitive base pay and benefit range with its U.S. unionized and

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non-unionized competitors," Delphi said in a statement. "We believe that the focus of the discussions should move toward a solution, given that the transformation needs facing Delphi have been well defined."

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Gettelfinger said the union does not believe Delphi wants to make a deal and said the company would have to raise its offer considerably "before there's any chance of us reaching an agreement."

Gettelfinger would not comment when asked about the likelihood of a strike, saying he preferred to negotiate.

The offer was first presented last week to some of the seven unions representing Delphi's more than 33,000 hourly workers, union officials said. The UAW received it on Tuesday.

Leaders of the unions met jointly Wednesday to plan strategy in negotiations with Delphi.

UAW Vice President Richard Shoemaker said there have been two bargaining sessions with the company, but neither has resulted in anything substantial.

Troy-based Delphi, the largest U.S. auto supplier, filed for bankruptcy protection last month, citing high labor costs. The company has said it will ask a bankruptcy court judge to void its union contracts in mid-December if it has failed to reach an agreement with its unions.

Gettelfinger called bargaining with Delphi "more like a dictatorship," and he accused the company of trampling on its workers.

At the news conference, Gettelfinger and officials of other unions criticized Delphi and Chairman and CEO Robert S. "Steve" Miller. Many said the looming union showdown with Delphi is about preserving good pay and benefits for all U.S. workers.

"Delphi rushed into bankruptcy with the primary purpose of having legal cover to break the promises it made to its workers and retirees," said Henry Reichard, an official of the International Union of Electronic, Electrical, Salaried, Machine and Furniture Workers-Communications Workers of America in Dayton, Ohio.

Union officials said Delphi plans to cut two-thirds of its production work force, reducing it to 10,000 people over roughly three years.

Delphi Corp.: <http://www.delphi.com>

United Auto Workers: <http://www.uaw.org>

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